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Subject: [redacted] Construction Implemented by the Armed Forces
and Ministry of Internal Affairs

25X1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
(1) General	1
(2) Types of Secret Military Construction Enterprises	1
(3) Contracts Made with Labor Battalions	4
(4) Cadres, and the Number of Labor Battalions	8
(5) Secret Construction Enterprises	9
(6) Mixed Civilian Enterprises with Secret Sections	13
(7) The Outlays for Military Construction in 1957	14
(8) Construction by the Ministry of Public Security	17
(9) Construction Work and Production of Prefabricated Elements by the Department of Prisons of the Ministry of Internal Affairs	18
(10) Resume	19

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CONSTRUCTION IMPLEMENTED BY THE ARMED FORCES AND MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

General

Construction projects have been built by the so-called "Organized Forces" (Sily zorganizowane) that is, construction groups and units subordinated to the armed forces which are Labor Battalions (Bataliony Pracy) or prisoner groups under the Department of Prisons.

Data concerning these labor forces were secret

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1. Military construction

The Ministry of National Defense is an important investor with special demands in relation to the construction industry, namely ~~of~~ secrecy. In many cases these secrecy requirements went so far that the Ministry of National Defense did not want to give non-military personnel permission to enter military

-2-

terrain at all. In such cases the Ministry of National Defense, until 1957, used its own construction units, in most cases the Military Labor Battalions (Wojskowy Batalion Pracy) which were in army uniforms and belonged to the army, and where the management of construction was carried out by officers and noncoms.

Labor battalions were subordinated to the Chief of Rear Services (Szef Sluzby Tylowej) worked both directly and on a contract basis.

a) The Direct form of work was of the following type: the Chief of Rear Services would order one of the labor battalions to do some work such as fortifications or building barracks. In most cases however, a commanding officer of a military unit or of a military garrison submitted a requirement for allocation of labor companies in order to implement construction work in his garrison, e.g., the construction of a shooting range, a military training ground or any buildings and barracks, etc. In such cases after previous approval by the Quartering- Construction Department of the Ministry of National Defense, the Chief of Rear Services would assign the required labor battalions or companies. It was, in fact, like an allocation for investments for a particular garrison, but not in the form of funds, materials, or equipment, but in the form of labor.

b) In a contract, the Chief of Rear Services gave the services of a labor battalion for hire to a selected state construction enterprise (which was engaged in military construction work, e.g. for the

-3-

construction of a military airfield).

Thus the Ministry of National Defense helped the construction enterprise to implement the military construction (in our example an airfield). Such help was necessary if the airfield was located in a distant area where there were no local workers and where bringing in workers from other places would be a slow and costly process especially because of security clearances. The assignment of 500-1000 workers who were already checked because the army was responsible for them, was a really big help to an enterprise. In addition to military units, the following civilian organizations were entitled to contract for the help of labor battalions: The state construction enterprises subordinated to the Ministry of Construction which were specially organized for construction for the armed forces and the Ministry of National Defense. Such enterprises were often named "Military construction enterprise No's... (1-22) - Wojskowe przedsiebiorstwo budowlane. Sometimes the word "military" was omitted in their name, although they had the same duties and rights as the others, from the security point of view. These rights entitled them to pay 5% higher salaries and wages to the technical personnel and their workers. Such "secret" or classified as they were called in Poland, construction enterprises had all personnel checked by security and all their activities were classified as secret and under special secret procedure. Every year these enterprises received some labor battalions, which were taken into account in their yearly

-4-

plans and the Ministry of National Defense also planned that such and such ^{of} number of labor battalions would work on the construction projects of these state construction enterprises.

Occasionally a non-classified state enterprise also got some labor battalion help. In 1953/1954 the Nowa Huta Metallurgical Combine project and the State Railway Construction Enterprise got help from labor battalions. Such cases took place when the Chairman of Ministers Council approved, in agreement with the Minister of National Defense, that such investment must get help because of the shortage of workers. Such cases were rare for the following reason: First of all the Ministry of National Defense had its own plan of employment for labor battalions for garrisons, fortifications, and other military investments. Secondly, ordinary construction enterprises were not always anxious to hire labor battalions because this had advantages and disadvantages.

A standard contract between the construction enterprise and the Chief of Rear Services which was approved by the Ministers Council in 1955 included the following:

- a) The state enterprise hires a group of labor battalions or companies with their commanding officers and headquarters. In most cases a group had about 500 men. It remained under its

-5-

headquarters orders, and the manager of the construction

project could give only orders to commanding officers who

on their part gave the command to the soldiers.

b) The enterprise was obliged to supply quarters. They could

be barracks, the same or common quarters for construction

workers on the construction site, i.e. 4 square meters for

one person, but they could also be tents. The last condition

was a great advantage for the enterprise especially since labor

battalions furnished the camp equipment themselves.

c) In case the labor units were quartered in tents, the

permissible period of work was from 1 May to 31 October, because

of climatic conditions. In practice the enterprises were not

able to furnish barracks for even if barracks were available

they had to be assigned to civilian employees, therefore the

period of employment of labor units was in practice only half

a year.

d) As a rule the Ministry of National Defense rejected contracts

for shorter periods than half a year. For this reason a con-

struction enterprise had often to hire a labor battalion from

1 May, although the earthwork could not start before 15 May

because of the spring thaw, and pay the daily wages from 1-15 May

for nothing.

-6-

e) Daily wages have amounted since 1956 in 1956 prices to about 17 zlotys per soldier. Officers and noncommissioned officers pay was included in these 17 zlotys, and they were not paid by the enterprises. the daily wages in 1959 would be about 20 zlotys, taking into account the increase of some hourly wages in construction industry in 1957-1959. This is a low wage. A civilian unskilled worker in earthwork was paid daily at least 30 zlotys in 1957, to which should be added quartering or transportation by truck from nearby villages, supplemental payment for food in a canteen, where the construction enterprise sells lunch and supper below cost. In practice civilian worker cost was at least 36 zlotys daily, i.e. twice as much as the payment for a soldier from a labor battalion, and this was the biggest attraction of employing labor battalions, but the productivity of soldiers was lower than of civilian workers.

25X1

f) This lower productivity was caused by the fact that they worked for daily payment and not on piece-time work, and secondly by the double subordination. The technical directives were given by a master worker or an engineer of the construction enterprise, but direct orders were given by the soldiers' superior officers. Since 1957, piece-time work system has been introduced for the soldiers, i.e. the norms were fixed (a civilian master worker

-7-

fixed it on the construction site). For work above the norm the construction enterprise paid bonuses in addition to the above-mentioned 17 zlotys per soldier to the labor battalion. This additional earning went to the soldiers' savings books after a very small income tax deduction. In this way the soldiers were more interested in productivity but the effect of this reform was not very great. Piece-work requires good preparation of work and a steady supply of materials. It is difficult to have an efficient organization where there is no unity of command. Such work can be given only to an entire platoon and not to a smaller group, and as a result, some soldiers in the platoon worked very well and some not at all, and the platoon as a unit did not exceed the norm although individual soldiers did. Quite a lot depended on the non-commissioned officers and master workers and the mutual relations between them.

g) A very important paragraph of the contract was the question of accidents and sickness. The construction enterprises did not pay for hospitalization. This was counted in the 17 zlotys daily wages. In case of an accident the soldier had the same protection as a soldier on active duty. Nevertheless the Ministry of National Defense was entitled to demand payment for injuries caused by lack of supervision by the construction enterprise due to an accident.

-8-

Cadres and the number of labor battalions

The service in labor battalions was equal to active military service and lasted two years but was considered somewhat of an inferior category. The soldiers underwent basic military training from November to April inclusive. Soldiers which were at first assigned to active units but committed some violations of discipline or were found below the standard of intelligence were assigned to the labor battalions. This was the official explanation for their assignment which ^{should}~~could~~ be accepted with reservation. The engineers who worked with labor battalions said that they sometimes had highly intelligent people, sometimes very good artisans, and that some recruits were directed straight to labor battalions for political reasons, if they had a bad recommendation from Polish Youth Union or Party circles, from schools of their residence; e.g. a son of a well-to-do farmer (kulak) was sent at once to a labor battalion.

The Polish labor battalions were organized on the Soviet model where a great number of soldiers, so-called foreign to the working class or from minority nationals, etc., were assigned from the beginning to such units. Anyway the Ministry of National Defense officially stated that labor battalions are not disciplinary units, but public opinion in Poland regarded them as such. The Polish labor battalions were not so badly or harshly treated, ^{as}~~or~~ in the

-9-

USSR, they had good food, enough cigarettes, etc.

in 1957 there were about 18-20,000 men in labor battalions of which 8,000 were working under contract in the secret construction enterprises, and the rest directly in the military garrisons. They not only did construction work but also repair, artisan, and auxiliary production work. For the year 1958 a reduction of contract labor units to 5,000 men was planned.

25X1

Therefore, it should be remembered when analyzing the total amount of employed in construction in Poland, that in addition to the figure given in the official statistics, about 20,000 are working in these military units.

2. Secret construction enterprises

The organization of military construction work went through various stages reflecting the view of various ministers who were in charge of the Ministry of National Defense, as well as the various pressures of the USSR on the organizations which were in charge.

a) Just after WWII in 1945 the Minister of National Defense, Rola-Zymirski, and then vice-minister, Marian Spychalski, based the organization of military construction on the prewar Polish structure. The Quartering-Construction Department of the Ministry of National Defense which was very large fulfilled the role of investor and supervisor, had many diploma engineers in

-10-

uniform, advertised projects to be constructed and decided about the offers of the lowest bidding enterprise. A military Designing Bureau was created for designing and estimates which the Quartering-Construction Department also supervised. From 1945-1948 all constructions were implemented on the basis of bids by private firms and also partly by the state enterprises, also based on bidding if their offers were cheaper than those of private firms. In 1947 a corruption affair was disclosed which was blown up and publicized². Colonel Bronski, the chief of the Quartering-Construction Department of the Ministry of National Defense and two other colonels were shot and seven senior officers and captains were sentenced to seven to 15 years in prison. In 1948, Spychalski and in 1949, Rola Zymirski were imprisoned for political reasons.

b) Diotr Jaroszewicz was made General Quartermaster in 1948, and he forbade contracts with private enterprises, cancelled the method of bids, and created a new organization based on the Soviet model "voyenno-stroy". Colonel Antopolski, a Russian of Polish origin, was assigned chief of the Quartering-Construction Department. Also a Central Administration of Military Construction Enterprises (Centralny Zarzad Przedsiębiorstw Wojskowych-CZPW~~o~~jsk) was created which, during the period 1948-1950, organized 22 enterprises of which seven were assembly and 15 construction enterprises. Either the director or the vice-director of such an enterprise was an officer in uniform (Captain or Lieutenant

-11-

colonel). The personnel was mainly civilian persons but there were also a few junior officers, technicians and engineers, also in uniform. At the above-mentioned central administration all three directors (chief, technical and administrative) were senior officers. The central administration built military barracks, housing for officers, capital repairs of military buildings, and fortifications.

c) Marshall Rokossowski, who succeeded Zymirski, adopted another principle. He militarized the entire Polish economy to a great extent, he created a military department in every ministry and in addition in 1951, created a secret central administration in the Ministry of Industrial Construction under the cover name "Central Administration of Civil-Engineering Construction" (Centralny Zarzad Budownictwa Ladowo-Inzynieryjnego-CZBLI) which was given the task of building military airfields and secret petroleum depots. This CZBLI organized four construction associations of which two were in Warsaw, one in Bydgoszcz and one in Poznan.

Rokossowski was of the opinion that the civilian enterprises work better than military ones. But for security he so strictly enforced the regulations and arranged so much checking of civilian personnel that he somehow introduced a military system of secrecy into the civilian enterprises. A colonel, the director of the military department of each civilian ministry, represented the interest of the Ministry of National Defense and had great influence

-12-

influence. A director who was in charge of a secret construction enterprise or its deputy was also an officer obeying the orders of the Ministry of National Defense and not the orders of the Ministry of Industrial Construction.

In 1953 Rokossowski transferred the entire Central Administration of Military Construction with all its subordinate enterprises to the Ministry of City and Settlement Construction whose director was Colonel Kopec, the present Minister of the Ministry of Construction and Building Materials Industry.

d) In 1958 the Ministry of City and Settlement Construction was merged with the Ministry of Industrial Construction and through this an odd situation arose namely; in one ministry there were two secret central administrations only implementing investments for the armed forces. For this reason the CZBLI was merged with CZBWojk in one Central Administration of Military Construction (Centralny Zarzad Budownictwa Wojskowego-CZBWojk) with 26 enterprises.

e) The new Minister of National Defense, General Spychalski, who took over in 1956 ordered the liquidation of the Central Administration of Military Construction but did not liquidate the enterprises. They were subordinated to the regional central administrations which were created in 1957 when the Ministry of Construction and Building Materials Industry was reorganized. At the same time

-13-

these enterprises were permitted to take orders for nonmilitary construction also. This was necessary because on the one hand the Ministry of National Defense wanted to keep these enterprises and not liquidate them, on the other hand the program of airfields and military barracks was reduced so they had to look for additional work. For this reason since 1957 Poland has not an organization of the "voyenno stroy" type which exists in the USSR, Czechoslovakia, and in other satellite countries.

3. Mixed civilian enterprises with a secret section

The transfer to a mixed type of an enterprise implementing secret construction and ordinary construction projects had its precedent in industrial construction since 1951. The associations of industrial construction in many instances built secret projects of military and armament type, besides the ordinary construction projects. For this secret construction, they had to organize secret sections at their headquarters, i.e. such construction projects were entirely secret and at the headquarters of the association there were secret sections, and part of the personnel was checked by security organs and entitled to be engaged in secret construction projects. Of the total 131 larger industrial construction projects built during the Six Year Plan 1950-1955, about 40 were built as secret defense constructions. In addition there were airfields, depots, and telecommunications embracing

-14-

a total of about 30 large projects. This shows that if Rokossowski wanted to build these construction projects by the military construction enterprises they had to be very large, about one third to one-half of all enterprises of the Ministry of Industrial Construction. For this reason Rokossowski decided that the enterprises of industrial construction should build secret projects and imposed a very complicated and burdensome system of security for all of these special construction projects which were marked with a letter "S".

At present in 1959, there is only the system of mixed enterprises in two forms: the 26 enterprises mentioned on page 12 which build secret construction projects and all of whose personnel is cleared by security; 22 of them are still using the names Association of Military Construction. But others, especially large associations, engage mainly in ordinary nonsecret construction and only some of their construction projects are secret, and only a part of the personnel is cleared. The rigors of security have been reduced since 1956.

The outlays for military construction

The amount of outlays for military construction were not published. The construction plan of the ^Central Administration of Military Construction, which was transferred^{ed} in 1956/1957 after the merger of ministries from the Ministry of City and Settlement Construction, amounted for the year 1957 to 850 million zlotys (military barracks, repairs, fortifications, the last being 250-300 millions). The Central

-15-

Administration of Civil Engineering had about 500 millions for the construction of airfields and depots. The total for military construction amounted to between 1,350 - 1,500 million zlotys.

Besides that, the Polish navy had a program of about 150-200 million zlotys which was partly implemented by the selfmanagement economic system and partly by the Enterprise for Dredging and Underwater Work (Przedsiębiorstwo Robot Czerpalnych i Podwodnych) located in Gdansk.

In addition construction implemented by the selfmanagement economic system using 10,000 men from labor battalions (the remaining 8,000 hired by secret construction enterprises were already taken into account and which amounted to about 1,350 - 1,500 million zlotys). The value of this construction built by the 10,000 men from labor battalions amounted, [redacted] to about 500 million zlotys.

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To all this should be added the work done by pioneers and engineers~~r~~ing troupes of the Regular Army. The army engineers had their own

bulldozers and power shovels whose work potential amounts, [redacted]

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[redacted] ^{to} ~~was~~ about 15-20% of the civilian construction industry.

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Therefore, the purely military construction work for the armed forces amounted in 1956 prices in 1957 to about 2-2.5 billion zlotys, i.e. about 6-7 % of the national construction-assembly production.

About 1,300-1,400 million zlotys is included and hidden in the official statistics, but between 600 million and one billion zlotys

-16-

Breakdown of Military Construction Expenditures

1957

(million zloty - 1956 prices)

By the Central Administration of Military Construction		600 for barracks and repair 250 fortifications
Civil Engineers		500 depots and airfields (this is the exact figure)
All other small enterprises		1350 <u>150 to 200</u> 1500
Self-management work by the labor battalions	apx	500
Pioneers and regular army engineers	apx	500
		<u>2500</u>

~~-17-~~
~~-16-~~

is outside the official statistics. The construction production is therefore bigger by this sum of about 2-4 % than one would gather from the official statistics. At present, in 1959, this sum is approximately the same, or somewhat smaller.

4. Construction by the Ministry of Public Security

In 1946 the Ministry of Public Security created its own construction enterprise under the name Construction Enterprise of the Ministry of Public Security with its head office in Warsaw.

This was a secret civilian enterprise which had the task of building projects for the Ministry of Public Security, and for the Central Committee of Polish Workers Party (later Polish United Workers Party). It also built villas for party officials, housing projects for employees of public security, garages, repair shops, hospitals, recreation centers, prisons, forced labor camps, buildings for Frontier Defense Forces, for Internal Security Corps, new building for the Ministry of Public Security in Warsaw at Rakowiecka street, etc. Most of the construction was in Warsaw. The yearly production of this enterprise amounted during 25X1
the period 1947-1956 to about 500 million zloyts in 1956 prices. A part of this is given in the official statistics under cover names but about half was not listed at all.

This enterprise was privileged as to salaries and housing for its employees and of course had a priority in allocation of building

- 18 -

~~17~~

materials. It employed, besides employees cleared by security, prisoners from forced labor camps and prisons. The prisoners were subordinated to the Department of Prisons of the Ministry of Public Security and were hired by this construction enterprise according to need. When the Ministry of Public Security was liquidated in 1955, this construction enterprise remained and its name was changed to Construction Enterprise of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In 1957 this enterprise was transferred to the Ministry of Construction and Building Materials Industry and subordinated to the Warsaw Construction Administration under new name Association of Urban Construction No 7, in Warsaw.

Its construction plan for the year 1958 amounted to only 300 million zlotys in 1956 prices, and embraced mainly construction projects for the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other non-secret housing construction. At present this is a mixed civilian enterprise, a majority of whose projects are secret construction projects similar to the military construction enterprises. It still employs prisoners, but fewer than before.

5. Construction work and production of prefabricated elements

by the Department of Prisons of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Besides giving prisoners for hire to the Enterprise of the Ministry of Public Security the Department of Prisons also hired them out to other industrial enterprises, mainly for mining and to stone quarries,

-19-
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which was stopped in 1956, also to the Ministry of Road and Air Transportation and to Ministry of Building Materials industry, mainly for lime quarries.

Besides that, the Department of Prisons had its own production of prefabricated elements. In camp Jaworzno there were in 1957 about 900 prisoners employed at the production of prefabricated wall and ceiling elements, in Slupsk, Milecin and Jerzmanowice about 700 worked in each place. Other prisoners did other types of work besides construction.

The Department of Prisons has its own designing bureau where imprisoned engineers and prewar owners of construction enterprises work. In 1956 about 60,000 prisoners were working in various kinds of jobs of which employed:

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at prefabrication	2,500-3,000
at the Enterprise of the Ministry of Public Security	2,500-3,000
in lime quarries of the Ministry of Building Materials	5,000
in quarries of the Ministry of Road and Air Transport	8,000

Altogether from 17,000 to 18,000 were employed at work connected with the construction and building materials industry. In connection with the amnesty in 1955/1956, this number has since decreased from year to year. It can be accepted that at present, in 1959, about 4,000 prisoners are employed in the construction industry including prefabrication, and their auxiliary type production worth about

- 20 -

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200 million zlotys yearly is not included in the official statistics.

Thus, it should be remembered that besides the value of the construction production given in official statistics, there is also basic and auxiliary construction production which is implemented by labor battalions and prisoners and not shown in official statistics. In 1959 they amount to about 14,000-16,000 workers and their production is worth about 750 million zlotys yearly. Only a part of their work is given in statistics, namely the work of those who are hired on contract. This kind of labor force is diminishing.